



# **Dowson Primary Academy**

## **HOMEWORK POLICY**

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Review Cycle: 3 years

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## **Introduction and Rationale**

As pupils' first educators, parents are vital in ensuring children develop key life skills at different stages of their development in order that they are well equipped for each stage of their learning. They are also able to support and enhance their children's academic progress and rounded development through various means and this policy sets out the ways in which Dowson uses homework as a vehicle to make the most of these opportunities.

Dowson's homework policy reflects the importance we place on children developing fluency in the basic skills of Reading, Writing and Mathematics and their metacognition. It also seeks to ensure a 'well-rounded child' who can communicate effectively and be afforded a wide range of experiences that build 'cultural capital'.

The policy should be read in conjunction with the National Curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, the school's Vision and Values document and all other teaching, learning, assessment and curriculum documentation. Homework is also referenced in the parents' part of the Home-School PACT agreement.

## **Aims**

Our policy on homework aims to do the following:

- Ensure that parents are clear about key, age-related, skills their child is expected to be able to do to support each stage of their learning and development.
- Support the development of a love of reading as well as rehearse reading skills to improve fluency, stamina and understanding.
- Ensure children acquire and become fluent in the basic skills of English Handwriting and Spelling, and Mental Maths Arithmetic, which are key in securing a high standard and ability in Writing and Mathematics
- Ensure pupils, supported by parents, work on areas specific to their own development and progress.
- Provide opportunities for children to rehearse / recall prior learning to support forthcoming learning in class.
- Reinforce work covered in class by providing further opportunities for individual learning, where necessary.
- Encourage children to develop the responsibility, confidence and self-discipline needed to study with increasing independence in preparation for the next stage of their education.

Occasionally homework will also:

- Provide opportunities for families to engage in family talk about interesting topics or undertake activities / experiences together and share and enjoy the learning opportunities, knowledge and vocabulary building that these opportunities create.
- Be research or project based to enhance children's knowledge of a topic or subject or demonstrate their learning for a particular purpose such as exhibitions.
- Provide revision or practice activities in preparation for statutory testing.
- Be used to prepare Year 6 pupils for the transfer to secondary school.

## **HOMEWORK TYPES**

### **READING**

Research demonstrates that reading is fundamentally important for primary-aged pupils, significantly influencing their academic performance, cognitive development, mental well-being, and social skills. A love of reading is more impactful for a child's educational success than their family's socioeconomic status! Being able to read fluently is the key to accessing the whole curriculum across all subjects and is our highest priority for home learning because it:

- ✓ Boosts achievement across the curriculum
- ✓ Enhances vocabulary and language and therefore verbal and written skills
- ✓ Strengthens brain connections and improves critical thinking
- ✓ Enhances concentration and focus.



- ✓ Fosters creativity and imagination and nurtures empathy
- ✓ Improves mental well-being and reduces stress
- ✓ Reduces inequality and builds cultural capital

Children are **taught** to read at school and **practise** at home. When children are first learning to read, phonetically decodable books from our phonics scheme (Read Write Inc) are used for children's home reading practice until they have learned all sounds, are reading fluently and able to decode longer unknown words. At this point, they should be able to read turquoise level books on our reading book band scheme and can begin to bring these home for reading practice. It is important to note that the books will match the stage of phonics that the pupil has acquired and should feel 'easy' to read. This is because the practice is to ensure children build fluency and experience the feeling of success. It is also ok for children to read the same book more than once – or as many times as they like.

As part of reading practice, children, particularly in Foundation Stage and Key Stage One, may be sent home with flashcards containing key words for them to learn by sight.

All children of all ages are expected to read daily. Younger children should be supported by reading aloud to and discussing their reading books with an adult. Older children should still have opportunities to read aloud to an adult regularly, but they are also expected to read silently for sustained periods of time, independently and with longer and more complex texts. They continue to progress through a colour book banded book scheme which ensures they are accessing age-appropriate level of text, content and vocabulary in order to progress.

Their coloured book band book is their book for reading practice and fluency development. Pupils will also continue to be encouraged to enjoy reading through a wide range of texts that they can choose from as their book for pleasure.

In Reception and Key Stage 1 the minimum expectation for children's reading time is 10 minutes, building to 15 minutes by the end of Key Stage 1 as they become more fluent. This should be daily, with a minimum expectation of 5 times a week in order to build their stamina for the longer and more complex texts they will be facing in the next stage of their education.

In Key Stage 2, the minimum expectation for children's reading time is 20 minutes, building to 30 minutes by the end of Key Stage 2 in preparation to build sufficient stamina to access and comprehend age-appropriate texts in preparation for High School. This should be daily, with a minimum expectation of 3 times a week. *NB: Where pupils are not yet reading lime level reading books or above, they should continue to follow the KS1 model of 5 x a week and 15 minutes a session in order to accelerate progress to this level of book.*

Children in Key Stage 2 also have a 'READING PLUS' account that they may log in to and use for their reading. They are expected to spend 30 minutes a week as a minimum on their reading plus account.

All children have a reading record to complete each time they read; an adult should sign this to show they have read for the expected time and occasions. Children who have been unable to complete their reading practice at home will be given the opportunity to do so in their free time in school in order to sustain a good rate of progress.

Reading records are checked on a weekly basis.

### **SPELLING AND MATHS CHALLENGES**

Because we recognise the vital importance of 'the basics' in contributing to and, in fact, underpinning the whole of children's achievement, children are also expected to rehearse key spellings and number facts for quick recall as part of their homework; the expectation is that they learn these by heart.

Pupils can access Numbots, Times Table Rockstars and White Rose maths to rehearse their number facts. These apps have been specifically designed to engage and support children to rehearse the rapid recall of these facts. Again,



pupils are taught the facts in school and rehearse them often but regular practise at home on these applications will support the transfer to long term memory.

The expectations for fluency in number facts are:

By the end of Year 1 – addition and subtraction facts of all numbers up to 10

By the end of Year 2 – addition and subtraction of all numbers up to 20

By the end of Year 4 – all x tables and related division facts up to 12x12

For spelling, pupils can use the spelling challenge games on [flippity.net](http://flippity.net) to practise. They are issued a QR code linked to our word lists. Children should move through the series of challenges for their year group. The expectations for knowing how to spell the challenge words fluency are:

Challenges 1-20 – end of Reception

Challenges 21-40 – end of Year 2

Challenges 41-60 – end of Year 4

Challenges 61-80 – end of Year 6

Parents should check the fluency of the challenges by observing accuracy in the games or a quick test and then pupils can move on to the next set of words. Children continue to be tested at random from words they should know from previous year group cards to ensure they are remembering and mastering these spellings. Teachers also continue to look out for the application of these skills in day-to-day lessons in order to ensure they are secure. They may alert parents to spellings that a pupil cannot spell but are expected to be secure at that stage of education.

When the challenges are first introduced in Reception, these are given on cards to practice at home, with suggestions of how to help (in maths) for parents on the back of the cards. Reception children are expected to learn to read the challenge words by sight first. Any children who master the fluency of all these words, may begin to spell them when they are ready. This may also be the case for some children in Year 1 where they do not yet recognise by sight the high frequency words on their cards.

### **KEY LIFE SKILLS**

With the ever-increasing demands upon a 21<sup>st</sup> Century family and the challenges they face, fewer children enter school meeting 'school readiness' criteria and then throughout their primary school years, often do not acquire the life skills, traits or attributes required to achieve their full potential, be a 'well rounded' child and well equipped to face an unknown future. With this in mind, and to support our vision and values, each key stage has an overview document for parents which sets out the types of skills and traits vital to children's secure and rounded development. We ask that parents and pupils are continually referring to and developing these with their children throughout this key stage so that they are secured in readiness for the next stage of their education. Sometimes teachers may set a homework task in relation to one of the skills on their grid that they notice is not yet acquired securely for an individual, group or class.

### **INTERVENTION**

Where children have found class work difficult or need to secure a concept or method, teachers may send additional practice home for parents to support their children with on an individual or group basis. Occasionally, teachers may also think additional practice of something for a whole class would be beneficial and therefore send worksheets home to support learning and progress. This is certainly the case for early acquisition of skills such as letter and number formation for the youngest children and will sometimes be beneficial with other areas of learning too. This type of homework, its nature and frequency, is at the teacher's discretion to set.



## **REVISION**

There may be times when a topic that is coming up to be taught has some pre-requisite skills that pupils may have forgotten and need a quick reminder of. Homework of this nature will be for recall and rehearsal purposes and ensure a strong start to the upcoming lessons.

In the later stages of Key Stage 2 – and in particular Year 6 – there may be times when children are given additional homework. This could be additional reading for research, an English or Maths based task for further consolidation of classroom learning, or homework linked to intervention groups or revision for end of Key Stage tests. The duration for these tasks will be set by the adult issuing them but would usually be more than one night. It is crucial that children at this age learn to take responsibility for their homework and additional tasks and deadlines in order that they begin to prepare for homework of this nature at High School.

## **FAMILY TALK, RESEARCH OR PROJECTS**

To support children to learn the art of conversation and allow families quality time together to discuss learning and develop children's knowledge and vocabulary, we may sometimes set a talk piece. This may be in the form of a picture, a topic or theme, a question or a news item and will be framed by teachers in a way that inspires families to engage in purposeful dialogue, allowing children to have opinions, be curious, ask and answer questions, debate, suppose, theorise, emote and imagine. It may also be an invitation to engage together in an activity in order to promote talk and / or extend children's experiences and general knowledge.

In some circumstances, we may set the children a research style homework or a particular project to complete. These types of homework would be set where teachers wish to ignite children's enthusiasm and intrigue for topics that are coming up in the curriculum as well as allowing them to gain some subject knowledge that will, in turn, support their access and engagement with a topic back in class.

A special project may be set in line with a whole school event such as a hat parade.

## **Homework Tasks**

Listed below, is an outline of the homework and activities that will be set regularly for each year group. All additional homework tasks and activities will have a clear purpose and assist pupils in the process of their academic development as outlined in the aims and descriptions of homework types above.

### **NURSERY:**

- A library book is sent home to share with an adult each week and children draw/mark make to depict their favourite part of the book.
- Sometimes challenges may be set which invite parents and children to engage in something that will support their upcoming learning e.g. send in a picture of me when I was a baby to discuss growing and changes.
- Later on in the nursery year, sheets to support letter and number formation and name writing may be sent home for practice.
- Talk or experience homework as appropriate

### **RECEPTION:**

- Daily reading of Library or Reading Book (progressive throughout the year)
- Challenge cards for reading words, maths facts and, once able to read them, spelling of the challenge words
- Letter or number recognition and writing formation practice weekly once ready.
- Talk or experience homework as appropriate

### **KEY STAGE 1:**

- Daily reading of a home reader (10 minutes, building to 15 minutes and minimum of 5 x weekly)
- A minimum of one 10 minute practice of spelling challenge words for their year group on flippity.net
- A minimum of one 10 minute practice of number fact recall on Numbots or White Rose maths.
- Homework according to individual / group or cohort need – as set by the teacher.



- Other types of homework (as outlined in this policy) as and when necessary or appropriate and at the discretion of the teacher.

### KEY STAGE 2:

- Daily reading of a home reader (20 minutes, building to 30 minutes and minimum of 3 x weekly). **30 minutes of this reading should be through the Reading Plus Programme.**

***NB:** until children are reading lime level reading books, they should continue to follow the KS1 model of 5 x a week and 15 minutes a session in order to accelerate progress to this level of book.*

- A minimum of one 15 minute practice of spelling challenge words for their year group on flippity.net
- A minimum of one 15 minute practice of number fact recall on Numbots or White Rose maths.
- Homework according to individual / group or cohort need– as set by the teacher.
- Other types of homework (as outlined in this policy) as and when necessary or appropriate and at the discretion of the teacher.

**NB:** Year 6 may have additional activities with specific SATS foci and revision as and when necessary and with varying lengths of deadline.

### The Role of the Teaching Staff

- To promote the importance of homework – particularly reading fluency.
- To provide an explanation of homework tasks to parents when necessary and give guidance of how they might assist their child.
- To ensure that homework is set according to the guidance set out in this policy.
- To ensure any homework is purposeful and links directly to the aims of this policy, the curriculum being taught or skills needed to be acquired.
- To monitor homework is being completed and reward and praise children who regularly complete homework tasks.
- To guide children who may not be completing homework or need support by allowing them to complete relevant elements of homework in their free time in school.
- To communicate with parents where children are having to complete their homework during their free time in school in order that the expectation is that this is completed at home.
- To monitor the fluency expectations for their year group and allocate additional practice where these are not being met.
- To provide feedback for homework, where necessary.
- Liaise with parents and / or SLT where there are concerns regarding a child's homework.

### Role of the Principal

- To check compliance of the policy.
- To meet and talk with parents when appropriate.
- To discuss with staff how far the policy is being successfully implemented, and review and update the policy accordingly as a result of evaluation.
- Inform new parents to the school so that they are aware of the home/school PACT and what it entails.
- To review the policy on a 3 yearly basis, or when the need arises, accounting for the views of parents and pupils in the review.

### Role of Parents/Carers

- To sign the home school PACT which accounts for homework.
- To support the school by ensuring that their child completes homework.
- To provide suitable time and place for their child to carry out their homework.
- To encourage and praise their child when they have completed their homework.



- To encourage their child to read regularly from a range of fiction and non-fiction texts and listen to them read aloud regularly – daily wherever possible – particularly for younger year groups.
- To become actively involved and support their child with homework activities, particularly reading and the rehearsal of number facts and spelling within the challenges.
- To note the life skills grid in their child's homework pack and ensure their child is in line with these expectations wherever possible.
- To make it clear that they value homework and they support the school by explaining how it can help learning.
- To liaise with school regarding their child's homework or any concerns they have.

### General

- As a general rule, homework is not given during holiday time. However, it is expected that children continue to read regularly and keep 'on the boil' number facts and other key skills learned during the term or year so far.
- If children are absent due to illness, we will not send homework home. We would assume the child was too ill to work.
- If a child is absent for a length of time and cannot attend school due to medical reasons, the Pastoral Manager will support the teacher and the parent to agree what should be done, how it should be marked and what sort of help needs to be given. **In such circumstances the teacher should consult the Principal first.**
- It is not possible to give homework when parents take holidays in term time.
- Parents/Carers who have queries about homework should not hesitate to make an appointment to see their child's class teacher in the first instance.